

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI

Original Application No.29 of 2024 (SZ)

[Earlier O.A.No.639 of 2023 (PB)]

WITH

Original Application No.95 of 2024 (SZ)

[Earlier O.A.No.174 of 2024 (PB)]

WITH

Original Application No.138 of 2024 (SZ)

WITH

Original Application No.200 of 2024 (SZ)

Earlier O.A.No.599 of 2024 (PB)]

WITH

Original Application No.201 of 2024 (SZ)

[Earlier O.A.No.542 of 2024 (PB)]

IN THE MATTER OF:

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU based on the News Item in The Times of India Dt. 10.10.2023 titled TN Cracker unit blast kills 10, owner arrested".

And

Central Pollution Control Board, Through its Member Secretary
New Delhi and Ors.

WITH

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU based on the news item in India Today dt: 18.02.2024 titled, "10 killed in blast at Tamil Nadu firecracker unit several injured".

And

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Ors.

WITH

tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU based on the news item i
he Hindu, Chennai Edition dt: 02.05.2024 titled, "3 killed i
explosion in Virudhunagar". And

Central Pollution Control Board and Ors.

WITH

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU based on the news item appearing in NDTV.com dated 09.05.2024 titled, "8 explosion at fireworks factory near Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu" an news item in The Hindu dated 10.05.2024 titled, "10 workers including six women die in Sivakasi fireworks unit blast".

And

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Ors.

WITH

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU based on the news item in The Hindu dt: 01.05.2024 titled, "Three killed in blast at explosive storage unit in Virudhunagar".

And

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Ors.

REPORT FILED BY THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR, VIRUDHUNAGAR

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Through

Dr. D. Shanmuganathan

Standing Counsel for Government of Tamil Nadu

National Green Tribunal

Southern Zone, Chennai

DATE:19.08.2025

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL**SOUTHERN ZONE, CHENNAI****Original Application No.29 of 2024 (SZ)****[Earlier O.A.No.639 of 2023 (PB)]****WITH****Original Application No.95 of 2024 (SZ)****[Earlier O.A.No.174 of 2024 (PB)]****WITH****Original Application No.138 of 2024 (SZ)****WITH****Original Application No.200 of 2024 (SZ)****[Earlier O.A.No.599 of 2024 (PB)]****WITH****Original Application No.201 of 2024 (SZ)****[Earlier O.A.No.542 of 2024 (PB)]****IN THE MATTER OF:**

Tribunal on its own motion SUO MOTU based on the News Item in The Times of India Dt. 10.10.2023 titled **"TN Cracker unit blast kills 10, owner arrested"**.

And

Central Pollution Control Board, Through its Member Secretary
New Delhi and Ors.

WITH

Tribunal on its own motion **SUO MOTU** based on the news item in India Today dt: 18.02.2024 titled, **"10 killed in blast at Tamil Nadu firecracker unit several injured"**.

And

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Ors.

WITH

Tribunal on its own motion **SUO MOTU** based on the news item in The Hindu, Chennai Edition dt: 02.05.2024 titled, **“3 killed in explosion in Virudhunagar”**.

And

Central Pollution Control Board and Ors.

WITH

Tribunal on its own motion **SUO MOTU** based on the news item appearing in NDTV.com dated 09.05.2024 titled, **“8 killed in explosion at fireworks factory near Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu”** and news item in The Hindu dated 10.05.2024 titled, **“10 workers, including six women die in Sivakasi fireworks unit blast”**.

And

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Ors.

WITH

Tribunal on its own motion **SUO MOTU** based on the news item in The Hindu dt: 01.05.2024 titled, **“Three killed in blast at explosive storage unit in Virudhunagar”**.

And

Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Ors.

REPORT FILED BY THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE /
DISTRICT COLLECTOR, VIRUDHUNAGAR
RESPONDENT

I, Dr.N.O.Sukhaputra, S/o Obanna, aged about 39 years, presently working as District Collector, Virudhunagar District files the report as follows.

1. It is humbly submitted that the Hon'ble Tribunal has *Suo motu* taken cognizance of the recurring incidents of fire and explosions in fireworks manufacturing units, particularly in the Virudhunagar District, based on credible media reports. In this regard, the Hon'ble Tribunal has been pleased to direct a comprehensive inspection and regulatory evaluation

of the functioning of such units in the said district, to ensure public safety and strict compliance with statutory norms.

2. It is humbly submitted that all fireworks manufacturing units in Virudhunagar District operate with the requisite licenses issued under the Explosives Rules, 2008 and the Arms Act, 1959. Prior to granting construction approval, the District Administration rigorously verifies the safety distance norms stipulated under the Explosives Rules, 2008. Only upon such verification and satisfaction of compliance No Objection Certificates (NOCs) are issued by the competent authority.
3. It is humbly submitted that, In order to ensure effective and sustained monitoring of fireworks manufacturing units, a dedicated post of Special Tahsildar was created as early as 1982, prior to the formation of the present-day Virudhunagar District. The said official is entrusted with the primary responsibility of supervising and regularly inspecting the activities of fireworks manufacturing units to ensure compliance with safety and licensing norms.
4. It is humbly submitted that, In addition to the role of the Special Tahsildar, special inspection squads have been constituted to conduct periodical monthly inspections of all fireworks units across the district. These inspections are intensified during the summer season and in the run-up to the Deepavali festival, when production typically peaks. This practice has been diligently followed over the years and continues to be implemented without interruption. Notably, in the current year alone, these special squads have inspected 1,882 manufacturing units, thereby completed one full inspection cycle and initiated a second cycle. Based on the inspection findings:
 - o 40(2) notices under the Factories Act were issued to 90 units.
 - o 21 units were found to be in violation of safety and licensing norms and, consequently, their Form II (Sulphur) Licences were suspended under Section 17(3)(b) of the Arms Act, 1959.
5. It is humbly submitted that, Pursuant to the express directions of this Hon'ble Tribunal, the District Administration constituted 15 Special Inspection Squads, each headed by senior officials. These squads were

tasked with inspecting all 320 District Magistrate (DM) licensed fireworks manufacturing units operating in the district. The composition of each squad included personnel from the following departments:

- Revenue Department
 - Police Department
 - Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health (DISH)
 - Fire and Rescue Services Department
6. It is humbly submitted that, The inspections conducted by these squads focused on several critical parameters, including:
- Verification of essential valid licenses held by each unit;
 - Assessment of compliance with conditions stipulated in such licenses;
 - Evaluation of adherence to the Explosives Rules, 2008;
 - Inspection of safety zones, machinery, storage conditions, and employment of certified personnel;
 - Identification and documentation of any unauthorized constructions, activities, or deviations from approved norms.
7. It is humbly submitted that, Based on the reports submitted by the inspection squads, the following key irregularities were observed:
- Deviations in the usage of approved sheds;
 - Use of unauthorized materials and equipment such as iron tools, which are expressly prohibited;
 - Storage of semi-finished fireworks beyond the permissible limits, thereby posing a serious safety hazard.
8. It is humbly submitted that despite the aforementioned violations, all inspected units were found to hold essential valid licenses issued by both the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health (DISH) and the District Administration.
9. It is humbly submitted that, Further, out of the 320 units inspected, based on the inspection findings, 22 factories were suspended due to violations of safety norms and statutory provisions. Necessary enforcement action has been taken against these units.

10. It is humbly submitted that, Recognizing the need for enhancing workplace safety and ensuring adequate training, a dedicated post under the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health (DISH) has been sanctioned, with the Joint Director (DISH), Sivakasi, serving as the nodal officer. Under this initiative:

- Regular training programmes are being conducted for factory workers, proprietors, and inspecting officials.
- To date, a total of 39,367 workers, 499 factory owners, and 619 inspecting officers have been trained through this initiative.
- These training programmes are continuing regularly, with a strong emphasis on safety protocols, hazard prevention, and emergency response.

11. It is humbly submitted that, it is also placed on record that the majority of accidents in fireworks manufacturing units in Virudhunagar District have occurred in factories licensed by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO). A summary of these incidents is furnished in the Annexure enclosed.

12. It is humbly submitted that the fireworks industry constitutes a cornerstone of the local economy in Virudhunagar District. This traditional and long-established industry has not only shaped the industrial identity of the district but also serves as the primary source of livelihood for a substantial segment of the population. The industry provides direct and indirect employment to approximately two lakh families, encompassing workers, small-scale ancillary units, transporters, vendors, and various other stakeholders who are integrally involved in the value chain.

13. It is humbly submitted that, At present, Virudhunagar District is home to 320 manufacturing units licensed by the District Magistrate and nearly 800 units licensed by the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO). These units collectively contribute to a significant share of the national production of fireworks and related pyrotechnic

items. The industry's economic footprint extends across multiple sectors, including raw material supply, packaging, transportation, and retail, thereby generating widespread employment and fostering regional development.

14. In view of the above, it is most respectfully submitted that the District Administration recognizes the dual imperative of promoting economic sustainability while ensuring the highest standards of industrial safety. Accordingly, the Administration remains firmly committed to minimizing and preventing industrial accidents to the maximum extent possible.

15. It is humbly submitted that, A series of proactive, coordinated, and sustained measures have already been initiated, including:

- Comprehensive inspections and monitoring of licensed units;
- Suspension of licences in cases of violations;
- Constitution of multi-departmental special inspection squads;
- Regular training and capacity-building initiatives for workers, factory owners, and regulatory personnel.

16. In light of the foregoing detailed submissions, it is most humbly and respectfully prayed that this Hon'ble Tribunal may be pleased to take the above facts, actions, and compliance measures on record. The District Administration reiterates its unwavering commitment to ensuring public safety, regulatory adherence, and the sustainable functioning of the fireworks industry in the district. It is therefore humbly prayed that the above submissions may kindly be taken on record, and that this Hon'ble Tribunal may be pleased to pass such further or other orders as may be deemed fit and proper in the interest of justice.

Date: 18.08.2025.


**District Magistrate/
 District Collector,
 Virudhunagar.**