

NEXT DATE OF HEARING: 02.11.2023

BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL PRINCIPAL BENCH NEW

DELHI

ORIGINAL APPLICATION No. 662/2023

IN THE MATTER OF:

Suo Motu matter In re: News item appearing in manorama dated 19.10.2023 entitled "Fire in Kozhikode waste treatment plant: Opposition alleges corporation's conspiracy"

REPORT FILED BY STATE OF KERALA

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Report in NGT Suo Motu matter in OA No. 662/2023 based on news item appeared entitled "Fire in Kozhikode waste treatment plant : Opposition alleges corporation's conspiracy".

A fire broke out at 9.30 am in the Material Collection Facility (MCF) of Kozhikode Municipal Corporation at West Hill, Kozhikode. The Fire Rescue force reached immediately and extinguished it in the afternoon. Inorganic waste generated as part of road cleaning in Kozhikode Corporation had been collected at the West Hill plant. The plant was operating in a building located in 40 cents. 110 KV of electricity is connected to the building through the rear side of the plant. There is an Electric line and transformer nearby.

This MCF is managed by Konari Advanced Polymers under a contract with the Kozhikode Corporation. The previous contract expired on March 31th, and it was renewed on August 28th. According to the agreement till 31.03.2023, the waste was handed over to the waste management unit Konari Advanced Polymers. It was then subjected to further processing at Malabar Process Recycling & Manufacturing in Palakkad before being delivered to Dalmia Cements Ltd in Thiruchirapalli. At the time of completion of the agreement, the firm had removed all the waste from the plant. As soon as the agreement expired, new tender was invited and newly tendered agency Konari Advanced Polymers itself commenced waste disposal operations. The MCF has a capacity to handle 600 tons per day (TPD) of waste. Daily sweeping waste is collected from 8 circles and 3 zones, totaling approximately 2.5 TPD. The waste that was removed from the roadside by the sanitation workers of the Corporation from April 1st to August 28th 2023 was stored here. Due to the expiry of the contract, there was 419.95 tons per day (TPD) of waste stored at the facility. After the contract was renewed

on October 7th, more than 218.7 TPD of waste was removed, and a balance of around 200 TPD was at the facility at the time of the fire.

Guidelines regarding safety precautions to be taken to avoid fire situations and safety arrangements to be made in the Material Collection Facilities (MCF) have been issued as per GO(Rt) No. 113/2021/LSGD dated 16.01.2021. In the wake of the West Hill fire, these instructions were reiterated.

Circular No. WM1/40/2022/LSGD dated 02.02.2022 had been issued for prevention of accidents including fire at waste storage facilities such as Material Collection Facilities (MCF) and Resource Recovery Facility (RRF).

After the fire outbreak at Brahmapuram waste treatment plant, Additional Chief Secretary, LSGD had convened a meeting on 04.03.2023, wherein direction was given to assess the capacity and condition of existing systems for waste management. Direction has also been given for doing gap assessment. The Kerala Fire & Rescue Service Department was requested to conduct visits to the respective LSGs and verify whether the necessary precautions to avoid a fire have been taken at the institutions managing waste, and also to advise the authorities on practical precautions that can be taken in each facility. The officials were also requested to visit legacy dumpsites within the respective LSGs. Based on the report received from the Director General of Fire and Rescue Services Department, direction has been given to the Principal Director of Local Self Government Department to take measures to prevent the occurrence of fire in the dumpsites. As per GO(Rt) No. 617/2023/LSGD dated 15.03.2023 additional instructions has been issued on safety precautions and safety arrangements to be adopted in waste storage facilities to avoid fire situations. Regular review is being done in Government for reducing the gap between required and deployed

waste management facilities.

As per GO(Rt) No. 989/2023/LSGD dated 06.05.2023 orders have been issued to include the projects related to 'Malinya Muktham Navakeralam' Campaign activities in the annual plan. Besides above Government is in the process of developing a clear MCF protocol.

Additional Chief Secretary held an emergency meeting on 21.10.2023 following a fire incident in an MCF to discuss the frequently reported fire incidents in MCFs and RRFs and the following directions were given:

- Suchitwa Misison to take stock of all M.C.F. / R.R.F.
- All LSGs are directed to check their MCFs and RRFs from the angle of fire safety - a team was instructed to be constituted under the LSG Secretary with the Engineer and Haritha karma sena consortium representative for the same.
- Risk assessment and steps should be taken to avoid short circuit.
- LSGs should ensure that MCF / RRF personnel follow lightning precautions in the Orange Book on Disaster Management.
- All MCF / RRF shall purchase Fire extinguishers with the funds available, if not already done.
- Surveillance camera shall be installed in all MCF / RRF centres.
- Police patrolling shall be enforced.
- Garbage which cannot be disposed of by CKCL can be given to private agencies which are paying more amount than that by CKCL.

Instructions were given to the District Magistrates to ensure patrolling of the sensitive MCFs. The Police chief was also asked to give necessary instructions.

Report received from the Kozhikode on the fire incident is also submitted herewith which reveals that the plant has sufficient fire extinguishers. But the fire broke out on Sunday, when the unit was closed and there was no employee present to operate the equipment. Corporation authorities have lodged a complaint with the City Police Commissioner. Visuals from the cameras near the building are also being examined by the police.

The above facts are submitted before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal for consideration.



FILED ON: 01.11.2023

FILED BY:

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