

**REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE IN THE  
MATTER OF ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 210/2024 (WZ)**

(Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors)

**IN COMPLIANCE OF HON'BLE NGT ORDER**



**DATED 25/10/2024**

FOR SUBMISSION TO  
HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL,  
WESTERN ZONE BENCH, PUNE

December 2024

**REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE IN THE  
MATTER OF ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 210/2024 (WZ)**

(Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors)

Name	Department/ Organization	Signature
Shri.E.Thirunavukkarasu Scientist 'E'	Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Regional Office, Nagpur	
Shri. Shri Rahul Ingale, Chief Officer	Matheran Municipal Council, Tahasil - Karjat, Dist - Raigad	
Smt.Rutuja Bhalerao, Sub Regional Officer	Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Raigad - 2	 20/12/2024

**Table of Content**

<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Pg. No.</b>
	Report of the Joint Committee	4-8
	<b>List of Exhibits</b>	
Exhibit I	Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) issued directions in Paragraph 9 of its order dated 25.10.2024	9-12
Exhibit II	Joint Committee office order dated 04.11.2024	13-16
Exhibit III	Minutes of the meeting dtd. 07.11.2024	17-19
Exhibit IV	Photographs of sanitary workers of the council using handheld trollies	20-20
Exhibit V	Photographs of bio-methanation plant of 5 T/day capacity	21-21
Exhibit VI	Photographs of dump yard at were the plastic bottles are bundled/ compactor and given to recyclers	22-22
Exhibit VII	Proposals of five expert institutes	23-28

**Report Of Joint Committee in The Matter of Original Application No. 210/2024 (WZ)  
(Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors)**

**1. BACKGROUND**

The Original Application (OA) No. 210 of 2024 (WZ) was filed by Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. against the State of Maharashtra & Ors., addressing environmental degradation caused by the excessive use of horses for tourism and goods transportation in Matheran. The applicants submitted that Matheran, a hill station in Maharashtra, is part of an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) declared by the Government of India in 2003. Despite its pristine environment, Matheran has experienced severe environmental degradation due to the daily operation of approximately 460 horses and 200 ponies. This has resulted in over 3 tonnes of horse dung being indiscriminately dumped across the valley, significantly harming the region's ecology. The applicants further highlighted that this practice has led to air, water, and land pollution, adversely impacting the health of the local population.

In response to these concerns, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT) issued directions in Paragraph 9 of its order dated 25.10.2024 (**Exhibit I**). The directions are reproduced below:

*"9. In view of the submissions made in the present Original Application, we deem it appropriate to constitute a Joint Committee consisting of:*

*i. One representative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC);*

*ii. One representative of the Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council; and*

*iii. One representative of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB).*

*10. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board shall be the Nodal agency of the said Committee for coordination and logistic support.*

*11. The aforesaid Joint Committee is directed to visit the site in question; assess the environmental damage caused by movement of horses; and recommend measures for minimizing impact thereof on environment.*

*12. The Committee will be free to hire services of any expert organization and the cost therefor will be borne by MPCB from EDC funds available with MPCB. The Committee shall submit its report within 6(six) weeks by e-mail [ngt-pune@gov.in](mailto:ngt-pune@gov.in) preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.”*

## **2.0 THE COMMITTEE**

In compliance with the aforementioned order of the Hon’ble Tribunal, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), as the Nodal Agency, constituted a Joint Committee through an office order dated 04.11.2024 (**Exhibit II**). The committee comprises members from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB), and the Matheran Municipal Council. The composition of the committee is as follows:-

1. Shri. E. Thirunavukkarasu, Scientist ‘E’, Regional Office, MoEFCC, Nagpur
2. Shri Rahul Ingale, Chief Officer, Matheran Municipal Council
3. Smt Rutuja Bhalerao, Sub- Regional Officer, Raigad-2, Raigad Regional Office, MPCB.

## **3.0 APPROACH OF THE COMMITTEE**

As per the Hon’ble NGT order dated 25.10.2024, the committee was directed to

- (i) *visit the site in question; assess the environmental damage caused by movement of horses; and recommend measures for minimizing impact thereof on environment.*
- (ii) *The Committee will be free to hire services of any expert organization and the cost therefor will be borne by MPCB from EDC funds available with MPCB.*

## **3.1 MEETING**

The meeting of the Joint Committee was held on 07.11.2024 via video conference. During the meeting, it was decided to collect preliminary data from the Matheran Municipal Council regarding the number of horses permitted or engaged and the management of horse dung. Additionally, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) was tasked with obtaining quotations or proposals from reputed scientific institutes to assess the environmental damage

caused by the movement of horses. The committee also emphasized the need for recommendations on measures to minimize the environmental impact. The minutes of the meeting are enclosed for reference **(Exhibit III)**.

### **3.2 INSPECTION OF JOINT COMMITTEE AT MATHERAN**

The Joint Committee conducted a site visit on 26.11.2024 to assess the environmental impact at key locations in Matheran. The committee inspected major areas associated with horse movements and parking, including Charlotte Lake, Simpson Park, the main marketplace, major streets, the bio-methanation plant, and the solid waste dump yard.

The Joint Committee observed a significant accumulation of dried horse dung, in fibrous form, along the roadsides, as well as dust on the unpaved portions of the roads caused by horse movement. Additionally, there is a considerable likelihood of storm water contaminated with horse and urine from the Matheran area, flowing downstream into water reservoirs and tanks. According to the Matheran Council, the dung from the stables, and the roads are regularly collected by the sanitary workers of the council using handheld trollies and is disposed of in the solid waste dump site **(Exhibit -IV)**. The total solid waste generation in the area is about Three Tonnes/ day, out of which about 1.5 to 2 T/day is wet waste, which is treated in bio-methanation plant. The Council has established a bio-methanation plant of 5 T/day capacity **(Exhibit – V)** and all the wet waste generated from the Matheran is used in biogas generation. The gas generated is converted into energy through 40KVA Generator and the power is used for street lighting. The Council reported that 460 horses are permitted, around 200 ponies are permitted and about one T/day dung is generated. A separate digester was installed in 2019 to process horse and pony dung for biogas generation. However, the system experienced frequent blockages due to the high fiber content in the dung. As a result, the use of dung for biogas generation was discontinued in 2020 and it is collected and is dumped at Plot No MP114 dump yard. The plastic / recyclable waste is taken to dump yard at were the plastic bottles are bundled/ compactor and given to recyclers. **(Exhibit -VI)**.

According to available literature, horse dung is considered a valuable natural manure. Thus, converting it into manure could present a viable and eco-friendly solution. To comprehensively assess the environmental damage caused by the movement of horses and

recommend measures to mitigate its impact, a detailed study by a reputed scientific institute, as directed by the Hon'ble NGT, is deemed essential.

MPCB invited proposals from the following five expert institutes for conducting a study - Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University (DBATU), Mangaon, Dist.- Raigad; Department of Environmental Science, Savitribai Phule Pune University; Department of environmental science, Fergusson College, Pune, Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research, Pune and Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI), Mumbai for following terms of references (**Exhibit VII**).

- i. Assessment of the environmental damage caused by movement of horses, horse dung at the Matheran
- ii. Recommend measures for minimizing impact thereof on environment
- iii. Recommend the best eco-friendly practices for the management of Horse dung

Three institutes namely Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University (DBATU), Mangaon, Dist.- Raigad; Department of Environmental Science, Fergusson College, Pune and Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research, Pune submitted their proposals. The Joint Committee, along with the Joint Director (APC) of the MPCB, conducted a meeting via video conferencing on 10.12.2024. Presentations were delivered by the following institutions for the appointment of an expert agency as per the Hon'ble NGT's directions:

1. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University (DBATU), Mangaon, Dist. Raigad.
2. Department of Environmental Science, Fergusson College, Pune.
3. Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research, Pune.

The proposals were thoroughly evaluated by the Joint Committee, which determined that the proposal submitted by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University (DBATU),

Mangaon, Dist. Raigad, was the most suitable. This decision was based on the technical and financial details provided, as well as the agency's prior experience in handling matters before the Hon'ble NGT and other courts.

The Joint Committee has recommended Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University (DBATU), Mangaon, Dist. Raigad as expert agency and the appointment of the agency is in process. As per the proposal submitted by DBATU, the expected time frame for completing the study is eight weeks from the date of appointment.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University (DBATU) will conduct a detailed study and submit its report to the MPCB and the Matheran Municipal Council for implementation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Item No.1

(Pune Bench)

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

THROUGH PHYSICAL HEARING (WITH HYBRID OPTION)

**Original Application No.210/2024(WZ)**

Sunil Ramchandra Shinde &amp; Anr.

.....Applicants

*Versus*

State of Maharashtra &amp; Ors.

....Respondents

Date of hearing: 25.10.2024

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

Applicant : Mr. Tushar Kumar, Advocate

**ORDER**

1. The submissions of the learned counsel for applicants are that Matheran, a hill station in Maharashtra, is part of an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) declared by the Government of India in the year 2003. With its pristine environment, Matheran has faced serious environmental degradation due to the excessive use of horses for tourism and goods transportation. The present application highlights that there are 460 horses and 200 ponies operating daily, which is resulting in over 3 tonnes of horse dung being dumped across the valley, damaging the ecology. This resulted in air, water and land pollution, which, in turn, affects health of the people.

2. The main prayer in this application is to direct respondent Nos.1 to 4 to reduce plying of horses in Matheran ESZ, in order to save the environment of Matheran ESZ from further deterioration and suggest

alternative therefor to provide eco-friendly transportation, such as battery operated vehicles etc.

3. The learned counsel for applicants has further relied on the order dated 13.03.2023 passed by the Principal Bench of this Tribunal in **Original Application No.187/2023 (Shailendra Kumar Yadav vs. State of H.P.)**, in which the Tribunal, in para nos.5 & 6, has observed as follows:-

*“5. It is said that as per knowledge of applicant, Kufri was first place in in India to be developed for alpine skiing sport by the Britishers. Country’s first winter sports club was established here. This was because of lush deodar forest around made it possible for the area to have lots of snowfall during winter months starting from late November till end of February. This not only ensured adequate water supply and moisture required for Rees and forest fauna in the area but also continuous recharging of many natural sources of water in the area. However, due to callous attitude of State Authorities, rising number of horses and other local reasons, snowfall in the area is continuously declining for the last two decades. As a consequence thereof, water resources are drying. Shimla town itself remains devoid of any snow for most of the winter season. In order to encourage skiing activities in the area and for augmenting tourism, several steps were taken but this also adversely affected ecological balance in the area. Presently, there are about 700-800 horses functioning in a small area of 8-10 Sq. Kms, in and around the tourist village of Kufri, which is at the edge of reserve forest and catchment. Uncontrolled movement of horses has irreparably damaged flora and fauna of this eco-system. It has damaged food chain in the area. Continuous plying of horses has severely damaged beautiful forest trail and causing further damage to tree roots. The local administration has made available a huge area as parking area for horses in the prohibited area of forest. After the day's plying, the owners of these horses let the horses into the adjoining forests causing severe damage to deodar tree roots along with flora and fauna therein. One can see naked tree roots and drying trees and shrubs with heaps of stinking horse dung all over the area. Forest at a particular patch about one km from Kufri on the ChailKufri Road has been severely damaged by the horse owners by making an illegal*

*road applying a JCB machine which was in the knowledge of the forest authorities but they have not taken any action in the matter.*

*6. It is said that continuing degrading situation demands immediate action in the area as the forest and ecology of the area and has been will be severely damaged.”*

4. Considering the averments made in the present application, we *prima facie* find that substantial question relating to environment has been raised and therefore, we admit this Original Application.

5. Issue Notice to the respondents, returnable within four weeks.

6. Applicants/Registry are/is directed to take necessary steps for service of notice to the respondents by both ways and also on available email.

7. Applicants are directed to supply the copy of the application and relevant documents to the respondents within a week and after compliance of service of notice, applicants have to submit an affidavit that the notice and copy of the application have been served upon the respondents.

8. Respondents are directed to submit their reply/counter affidavits through e-filing portal of NGT, preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF, within 6(six) weeks.

9. In view of the submissions made in the present Original Application, we deem it appropriate to constitute a Joint Committee consisting of:

- i. One representative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC);

- ii. One representative of the Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council; and
- iii. One representative of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB).

10. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board shall be the Nodal agency of the said Committee for coordination and logistic support.

11. The aforesaid Joint Committee is directed to visit the site in question; assess the environmental damage caused by movement of horses; and recommend measures for minimizing impact thereof on environment.

12. The Committee will be free to hire services of any expert organization and the cost therefor will be borne by MPCB from EDC funds available with MPCB. The Committee shall submit its report within 6(six) weeks by e-mail [ngt-pune@gov.in](mailto:ngt-pune@gov.in) preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.

13. Applicants/Registry are/is directed to supply a copy of this order along-with the required documents and copy of the present application to the Members of the Joint Committee and the respondents within a week, for compliance.

14. List this matter for further consideration on 23.12.2024

**Sheo Kumar Singh, JM**

**Dr. Vijay Kulkarni, EM**

October 25, 2024  
Original Application No.210/2024(WZ)  
P.Kr & NPJ



भारत सरकार  
**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
 पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय  
 MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS &  
 CLIMATE CHANGE

Regional Office  
 Ground Floor, East Wing  
 New Secretariat Building  
 Civil Lines, Nagpur - 440001  
 apcccentral-ngp-mef@gov.in

**F. No. CC-527/RON/2024-NGP/**

**Dated: 05.11.2024**

To,

The Sub- Regional Officer,  
 Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,  
 Samaik Suvidha Kendra Building,  
 MIDC - Mahad, District Raigad - 402 309

**Subject: Original Application No.210/2024(WZ) in the matter of Sunil Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. vs State of Maharashtra & Ors. pending before the Hon'ble NGT (WZ) Pune-reg.**


Sir,

Kindly refer to the issue in the subject. In this regard, Shri E.Thirunavukkarasu, Scientist 'E' of this Regional Office has been nominated to represent the Regional Office, MoEF&CC, Nagpur, in the committee to be constituted based on the order of Hon'ble NGT dated 25.10.2024 in the matter of OA No. 210 of 2024, Western Zone Bench, Pune. His contact details are given below:

**E.THIRUNAVUKKARASU, Scientist 'E'**  
 Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change  
 Regional Office, Ground Floor,  
 East Wing, New Secretariat Building,  
 Civil Lines, Nagpur 440 001  
 Email: [e.thirun@nic.in](mailto:e.thirun@nic.in)  
 071-22526828  
 M: 7290835157

This is issued with the approval of the Competent Authority.

Yours faithfully

  
**(C. B. Tahildar)**  
**AIGF (Central)**

**Copy to for information:**

1. Shri E.Thirunavukkarasu, Scientist 'E', RO, MoEFCC, Nagpur
2. Guard File

**MAHARASHTRA POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD**

Tel. No. 2757 6034  
 Fax No. 2756 2132  
 Web site: www.mpcb.gov.in Sion  
 Email: jdair@mpcb.gov.in



Kalpataru Point, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Floor,  
 Opp. Cinemax theatre,  
 Circle, Sion (E), Mumbai-32.

No. BO/JD(APC)/B- 0109

Date :- 04/11/2024

**OFFICE ORDER NO. 0110 of 2024**

**Sub:** Constitution of Committee in compliance of the order of the Hon'ble NGT dtd. 25.10.2024 in O.A. No. 210/2024 (WZ) filed by Sunil Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors.

**Ref:** Hon'ble NGT order dtd. 25.10.2024 in O.A. No. 210/2024 filed by Sunil Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Sachin R Shinde has filed OA no 210/2024 and raised the issue of the Eco Sensitive Zone at Matheran declared by the Gov of India in the year 2003. The Applicant has stated that Matheran has faced serious environmental degradation due to the excessive use of horses for tourism and goods transportation. The Application highlights that there are 460 horses and 200 ponies operating daily which is resulting over 3 tonnes of horse dung being dumped across the valley, damaging the ecology, which resulted in air, water and land pollution affects health of the people.

In this regard, the Hon'ble NGT has constituted a three-member joint committee to assess the environmental damage caused by movement of horses, and recommend measures for minimizing impact on the environment, consisting of the following members:-

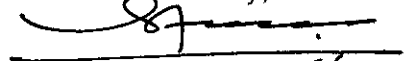
1. Representative of the MoEF & CC, Govt. of India nominated by MoEF & CC - Chairman
2. Representative of the Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council nominated by Chief officer - Member
3. Sub Regional Officer- Raigad 2 -Member Conveyor

**TERM OF REFERENCE FOR THE JOINT COMMITTEE ARE AS UNDER -**

- a) The Joint Committee shall visit the site in question, assess the environmental damage caused by movement of horses and recommend measures for minimizing the impact thereof on the environment.
- b) The committee will be free to hire the services of any expert organization, and the cost therefore will be borne by MPCB from EDC funds available with MPCB. The committee shall submit its report within 6 weeks by email [ngr-pune@gov.in](mailto:ngr-pune@gov.in).
- c) MPCB shall be the nodal agency of the said committee for co-ordination and logistic support.

This is issued with the Competent Authority of the Board.

Yours faithfully,

  
 (Dr. V.M Motghare) 04/11/24  
 JD(APC)

Encl: As above.

**Copy for necessary action to:-**

1. The Secretary, MoEF & CC, Govt. of India- with request to nominate the officials for the above committee.
2. The Chief Officer, Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council-with request to nominate the Officials for the above committee.

**Copy for information and necessary action to-**

1. Law Officer, (P & Divn-II), MPCB, Mumbai.
2. RO/SRO-II, MPCB, Raigad- They are directed to co-ordinate with the committee members and organize committee visits at the earliest & ensure compliance of the order in stipulated time.



## माथेरान गिरीस्थान नगरपरिषद

माथेरान, ता. कर्जत, जिल्हा- रायगड. ४१० १०२, ई-मेल आयडी : [mcomatheran@gmail.com](mailto:mcomatheran@gmail.com)

जावक क्र. - मागिनप : १५१ : २०२४-२५

दिनांक : ०६/११/२०२४

प्रति

मा. सदस्य सचिव साहेब,  
महाराष्ट्र प्रदूषण नियंत्रण मंडळ  
७ वा मजला रायगड भवन,  
सेक्टर ११, सी. बी. डी. बेलापूर,  
नवी मुंबई, महाराष्ट्र ४००६१४.

विषय: एकत्रित समिती गठित करण्यासाठी संस्थेकडून प्रतिनिधी ची  
माहिती बाबत.

संदर्भ :- मूळ अर्ज क्रमांक 210/2024(WZ) अन्वये, 25/10/2024 रोजीचा  
आदेश.

महोदय,

मूळ अर्ज क्रमांक 210/2024(WZ) अन्वये, 25/10/2024 रोजीच्या आदेशाच्या अधीन, आदेशातील  
मुद्दा क्र. 9 मध्ये नमूद केल्याप्रमाणे, पर्यावरण, वन आणि हवामान बदल मंत्रालय, महाराष्ट्र प्रदूषण नियंत्रण  
मंडळ, आणि माथेरान गिरीस्थान नगरपरिषद यांच्या संयुक्त समितीत प्रत्येकी एक प्रतिनिधी नियुक्त करणे  
आवश्यक आहे.

तरी, आदेशानुसार आपल्या संस्थेकडून माथेरान गिरीस्थान नगरपरिषदेच्या खालील प्रतिनिधीची  
नियुक्ती करून घेण्यात यावी.

प्रतिनिधिचे नाव: मुख्याधिकारी राहुल इंगळे

दूरध्वनी क्र : 8879530705

Email :- [mcomatheran@gmail.com](mailto:mcomatheran@gmail.com)

पुढील कार्यवाहीस्तव आणि माहितीस्तव सविनय सादर.

आपला विश्वासू

मुख्याधिकारी

माथेरान गिरीस्थान नगरपरिषद

**Minutes of the First Meeting of Joint Committee Constituted In  
Compliance Of The Order Dated 25/10/2024 Passed By The Hon'ble  
National Green Tribunal In Original Application No. 210/2024 (WZ),  
Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra &Ors**

Date: 07/11/2024

Time: 12.00 PM

The First meeting of joint committee constituted in compliance of Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (Western Zone) order dtd. 25/10/2024 in O.A. 210/2024 (WZ) wrt Sunil Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra &Ors was held on 07/11/2024 through video conference. Copy of the order is enclosed herewith as **Annexure 1**.

The Joint Committee members attended the meeting.

The Chief Officer, Matheran welcomed all the Committee members and briefed about the background of the subject matter. It was informed that the submissions of the applicants are that Matheran, a hill station in Maharashtra, is part of an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) declared by the Government of India in the year 2003, with its pristine environment, Matheran has faced serious environmental degradation due to the excessive use of horses for tourism and goods transportation. Further the present application highlights that there are 460 horses and 200 ponies operating daily, which is resulting in over 3 tonnes of horse dung being dumped across the valley, damaging the ecology. This resulted in air, water and land pollution, which, in turn, affects health of the people.

Hon'ble NGT vide its order dated 25.10.2024 has issued the following:

*"9. In view of the submissions made in the present Original Application, we deem it appropriate to constitute a Joint Committee consisting of:*

- i. One representative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC);*
- ii. One representative of the Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council; and*
- iii. One representative of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB).*

*10. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board shall be the Nodal agency of the said Committee for coordination and logistic support.*

*11. The aforesaid Joint Committee is directed to visit the site in question; assess the environmental damage caused by movement of horses; and recommend measures for minimizing impact thereof on environment.*

12. *The Committee will be free to hire services of any expert organization, and the cost therefor will be borne by MPCB from EDC funds available with MPCB. The Committee shall submit its report within 6(six) weeks by e-mail [ngt-pune@gov.in](mailto:ngt-pune@gov.in) preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.*

Accordingly, following Committee has been constituted:

1. Shri. E. Thirunavukkarasu, Scientist 'E', Regional Office, MoEFCC, Nagpur
2. Shri Rahul Ingale, Chief Officer, Matheran Municipal Council
3. Smt Rutuja Bhalerao, Sub- Regional Officer, Raigad-2, Raigad Regional Office, MPCB.

Copies of the office orders of the appointment of these representatives are enclosed collectively as **Annexure 2**.

It was discussed that similar matter has been put up before Hon'ble NGT (Delhi) in O.A. 187/2023 wherein the area of Kufri, Himachal Pradesh and the report of the Joint Committee appointed by Hon'ble NGT is available. The said Committee had appointed Himalayan Forest Research Institute (HFRI) as Expert agency. Copy of the report is enclosed as **Annexure 3**.

MPCB representative informed that four possible expert agencies in this matter are identified namely Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University (BATU), Mangaon, Dist.- Raigad; Department of Environmental Science, Savitribai Phule Pune University; Department of environmental science, Fergusson College, Pune and Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research, Pune.

After detailed discussions, following decisions were taken by the Joint Committee:

- i. Chief Officer, Matheran will submit the preliminary data regarding the Matheran site as follow-
  - a. Number of Horses, Ponies presently used/engaged
  - b. Present arrangement for dung management, if any?
  - c. Any analysis report of water from Charlotte Lake and Simpson's Tank
  - d. General Food given for Horses
  - e. Horses dung – composition- likely impacts on environment
  - f. Management of similar issues in the Country/ in the world
- ii. MPCB shall communicate to the identified four expert agencies regarding following Terms of Reference and invite financial quotations and then the Committee will decide about the finalization of the expert agency.

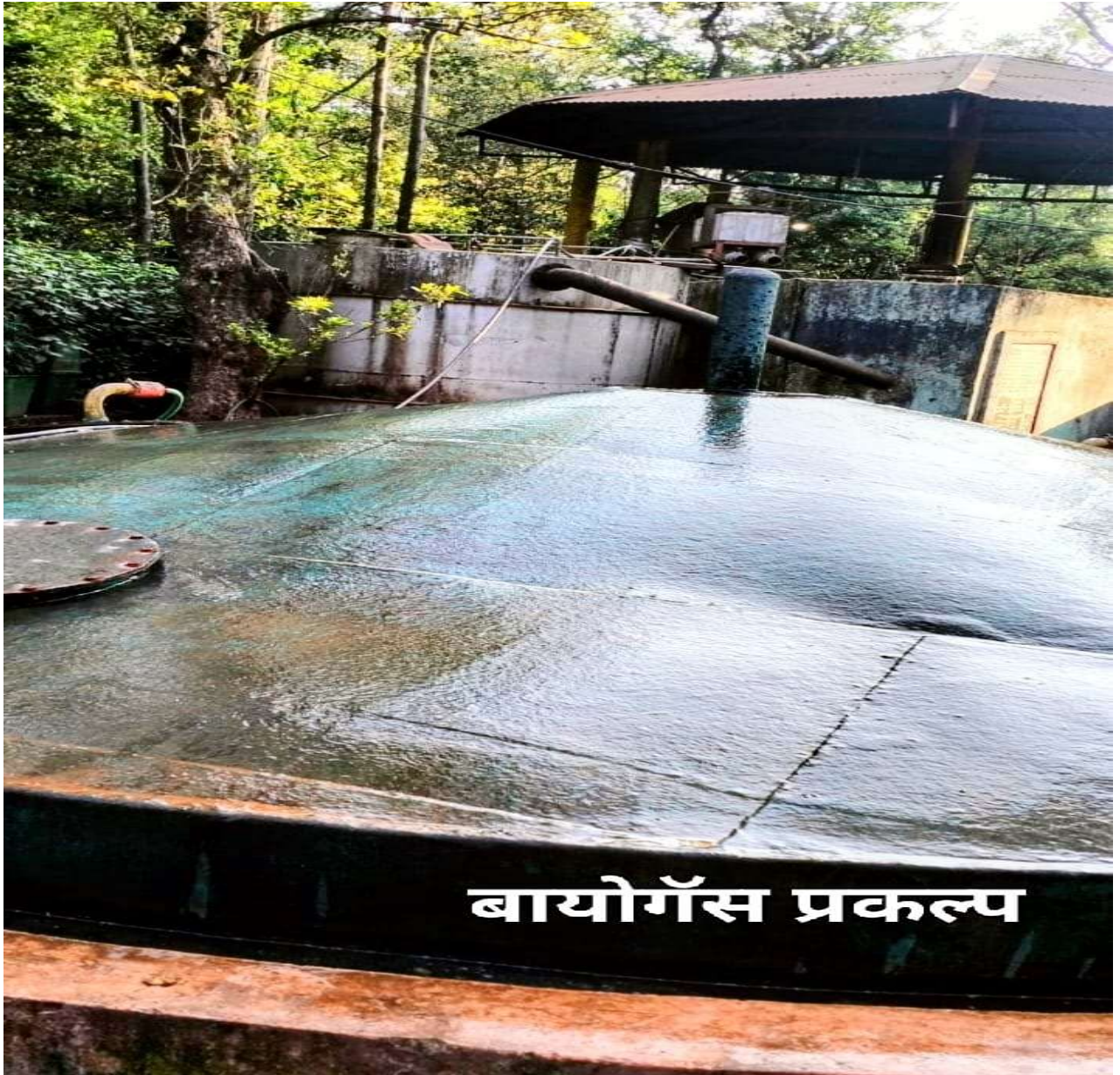
- a. Assessment of the environmental damage caused by movement of horses, horse dung at the Matheran
  - b. Recommend measures for minimizing impact thereof on environment
  - c. Recommend best eco-friendly practice for the management of Horse dung
- iii. The Committee will visit the site along with the expert agency representatives.
  - iv. Maharashtra State Pollution Control Board will collect the samples from nearby water sources (if any), to assess the possibility of ground water contamination from horse dung.
  - v. Considering the ongoing state assembly elections and administrative work regarding appointment of expert agency and time period required for the expert agency work and sampling etc., the Joint Committee will request Hon'ble NGT to grant extended time period for submission of the report.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Joint Committee members.

---

**Dung collection on roads by the sanitary workers of the council using handheld trollies**



**Biogas project at Matheran**

**Plastic waste collection by Matheran Municipal Council**



**Plastic waste compactor**





---

**Request Submission of Proposal**

---

**From** SRO Raigad 2 <sroraigad2@mpcb.gov.in>

**Date** Thu 14 Nov 2024 3:17 PM

**To** smpore@dbatu.ac.in <smpore@dbatu.ac.in>; hodenvsci@unipune.ac.in <hodenvsci@unipune.ac.in>;  
environmentalscience@fergusson.edu <environmentalscience@fergusson.edu>;  
bvuniversity@bharativedyapeeth.edu <bvuniversity@bharativedyapeeth.edu>

**Cc** RO Raigad <rorraigad@mpcb.gov.in>; e.thirun@nic.in <e.thirun@nic.in>; MUNICIPAL\_CO MATHERAN  
<mcomatheran@gmail.com>

2 attachments (1 MB)

Letter for Submission of Proposal to Expert Engencies.pdf; Annexure 1 NGT order dtd 25.10.2024.pdf;

Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed herewith the request for submission of proposal vide order dtd. 25/10/2024 in O.A. 210/2024 (WZ) wrt Sunil Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors.

You are requested to furnish your technical proposal for aforesaid Terms of Reference and provide financial quotation for this study, within 5 days, as the committee is required to submit report to Hon'ble NGT in time bound manner.

**Regards,**

**(Rutuja Bhalerao)**

**Sub Regional Officer, Raigad-2**

**Maharashtra Pollution Control Board.**

**MAHARASHTRA POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD  
SUB-REGIONAL OFFICE, RAIGAD-2**

Tel. No. 2757 2620  
Fax No. 2756 2132  
Email: [sroraigad2@mpcb.gov.in](mailto:sroraigad2@mpcb.gov.in)  
Visit us at: <http://mpcb.gov.in>



Raigad Bhavan, 6th Floor,  
Sec-11, C.B.D. Belapur,  
Navi Mumbai 400 614.

"Your Service is our Duty"

**Ref No: MPCB/SROR-2/ 241114-FTS-0113**

**Date: 14/11/2024**

To,

The Head of Department,  
Civil Engineering Department,  
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Technological University (BATU), Mangaon, Dist.- Raigad

The Head of Department,  
Department of Environmental Science, Savitribai Phule Pune University,

The Head of Department,  
Department of Environmental Science, Fergusson College, Pune

The Director,  
Bharati Vidyapeeth Institute of Environment Education and Research, Pune

**Subject: Request for Submission of Proposal**

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (Western Zone) vide order dtd. 25/10/2024 in O.A. 210/2024 (WZ) wrt Sunil Ramchandra Shinde & Anr. Vs. State of Maharashtra & Ors has appointed a joint committee consisting of representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council; and Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB). Copy of the order is enclosed herewith.

The Committee desires to appoint an expert agency for following Terms of reference:

- a. Assessment of the environmental damage caused by movement of horses, horse dung at the Matheran
- b. Recommend measures for minimizing impact thereof on environment
- c. Recommend best eco-friendly practice for the management of Horse dung

In view of above, you are requested to furnish your technical proposal for aforesaid Terms of Reference and provide financial quotation for this study, within 5 days, as the committee is required to submit report to Hon'ble NGT in time bound manner.

Yours Faithfully,

(Rutuja Bhalerao)  
Sub-Regional Officer, Raigad-2

**Copy to:**

- 1) Regional Officer, Raigad, MPCB
- 2) Shri. E. Thirunavukkarasu, Scientist 'E', Regional Office, MoEFCC, Nagpur
- 3) Shri Rahul Ingale, Chief Officer, Matheran Municipal Council

Item No.1

(Pune Bench)

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

THROUGH PHYSICAL HEARING (WITH HYBRID OPTION)

**Original Application No.210/2024(WZ)**

Sunil Ramchandra Shinde &amp; Anr.

.....Applicants

*Versus*

State of Maharashtra &amp; Ors.

....Respondents

Date of hearing: 25.10.2024

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

Applicant : Mr. Tushar Kumar, Advocate

**ORDER**

1. The submissions of the learned counsel for applicants are that Matheran, a hill station in Maharashtra, is part of an Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) declared by the Government of India in the year 2003. With its pristine environment, Matheran has faced serious environmental degradation due to the excessive use of horses for tourism and goods transportation. The present application highlights that there are 460 horses and 200 ponies operating daily, which is resulting in over 3 tonnes of horse dung being dumped across the valley, damaging the ecology. This resulted in air, water and land pollution, which, in turn, affects health of the people.

2. The main prayer in this application is to direct respondent Nos.1 to 4 to reduce plying of horses in Matheran ESZ, in order to save the environment of Matheran ESZ from further deterioration and suggest

alternative therefor to provide eco-friendly transportation, such as battery operated vehicles etc.

3. The learned counsel for applicants has further relied on the order dated 13.03.2023 passed by the Principal Bench of this Tribunal in **Original Application No.187/2023 (Shailendra Kumar Yadav vs. State of H.P.)**, in which the Tribunal, in para nos.5 & 6, has observed as follows:-

*“5. It is said that as per knowledge of applicant, Kufri was first place in in India to be developed for alpine skiing sport by the Britishers. Country’s first winter sports club was established here. This was because of lush deodar forest around made it possible for the area to have lots of snowfall during winter months starting from late November till end of February. This not only ensured adequate water supply and moisture required for Rees and forest fauna in the area but also continuous recharging of many natural sources of water in the area. However, due to callous attitude of State Authorities, rising number of horses and other local reasons, snowfall in the area is continuously declining for the last two decades. As a consequence thereof, water resources are drying. Shimla town itself remains devoid of any snow for most of the winter season. In order to encourage skiing activities in the area and for augmenting tourism, several steps were taken but this also adversely affected ecological balance in the area. Presently, there are about 700-800 horses functioning in a small area of 8-10 Sq. Kms, in and around the tourist village of Kufri, which is at the edge of reserve forest and catchment. Uncontrolled movement of horses has irreparably damaged flora and fauna of this eco-system. It has damaged food chain in the area. Continuous plying of horses has severely damaged beautiful forest trail and causing further damage to tree roots. The local administration has made available a huge area as parking area for horses in the prohibited area of forest. After the day's plying, the owners of these horses let the horses into the adjoining forests causing severe damage to deodar tree roots along with flora and fauna therein. One can see naked tree roots and drying trees and shrubs with heaps of stinking horse dung all over the area. Forest at a particular patch about one km from Kufri on the ChailKufri Road has been severely damaged by the horse owners by making an illegal*

*road applying a JCB machine which was in the knowledge of the forest authorities but they have not taken any action in the matter.*

*6. It is said that continuing degrading situation demands immediate action in the area as the forest and ecology of the area and has been will be severely damaged.”*

4. Considering the averments made in the present application, we *prima facie* find that substantial question relating to environment has been raised and therefore, we admit this Original Application.

5. Issue Notice to the respondents, returnable within four weeks.

6. Applicants/Registry are/is directed to take necessary steps for service of notice to the respondents by both ways and also on available email.

7. Applicants are directed to supply the copy of the application and relevant documents to the respondents within a week and after compliance of service of notice, applicants have to submit an affidavit that the notice and copy of the application have been served upon the respondents.

8. Respondents are directed to submit their reply/counter affidavits through e-filing portal of NGT, preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF, within 6(six) weeks.

9. In view of the submissions made in the present Original Application, we deem it appropriate to constitute a Joint Committee consisting of:

- i. One representative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC);

- ii. One representative of the Matheran Hill Station Municipal Council; and
- iii. One representative of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB).

10. The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board shall be the Nodal agency of the said Committee for coordination and logistic support.

11. The aforesaid Joint Committee is directed to visit the site in question; assess the environmental damage caused by movement of horses; and recommend measures for minimizing impact thereof on environment.

12. The Committee will be free to hire services of any expert organization and the cost therefor will be borne by MPCB from EDC funds available with MPCB. The Committee shall submit its report within 6(six) weeks by e-mail [ngt-pune@gov.in](mailto:ngt-pune@gov.in) preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.

13. Applicants/Registry are/is directed to supply a copy of this order along-with the required documents and copy of the present application to the Members of the Joint Committee and the respondents within a week, for compliance.

14. List this matter for further consideration on 23.12.2024

**Sheo Kumar Singh, JM**

**Dr. Vijay Kulkarni, EM**

October 25, 2024  
Original Application No.210/2024(WZ)  
P.Kr & NPJ