

**BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL  
(SOUTHERN ZONE BENCH, CHENNAI)**

**IN**

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 71 OF 2021 (SZ)**

**ACTION TAKEN REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF  
SECRETARY, ENVIRONMENT**

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Dated at Chennai on this the 15<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2022.

**M/s. E.K.KUMARESAN**

Standing Counsel for State Government of Kerala - NGT(SZ) Chennai Bench



(1)

BEFORE THE HONOURABLE NATIONAL GREEN  
TRIBUNAL SOUTH ZONE, CHENNAI

Original Application No. 71/2021

Suomoto Case.....Applicant


State of Kerala and others ..... Respondent

Report on Oil Spillage from Travancore Titanium Products Limited – submitted  
to the Hon'ble NGT on behalf of the Respondents – 1 to 4 in OA No. 71 of  
2021

I Dr. Venu V. IAS, aged 57 years, S/o Vasudeva Panicker quarters No.6, Jawahar Nagar, Kowdiar, Thiruvananthapuram do hereby solemnly affirm and state as follows.

I am the Additional Chief Secretary, Environment Department , who is the 2<sup>nd</sup> respondent in the above Original Application. I am well conversant with the fact of the case and competent to swear to this rejoinder in my official capacity.

It is humbly submitted that, There was a furnace oil spillage in Tranvancore Titanium Products Limited (TTPL) on 10.02.2021 at about 7.40 am due to an oil line breakage. Unfortunately the discharge drain in the plant going to the sea shore was just below the line and the spilled oil was carried away to the sea shore causing a major environmental incident. The problem was detected at around 7.50 am and the pump was immediately stopped. An estimated quantity of 4750 liters of the oil




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was spilled to the drain. Even though the drain was blocked immediately, some quantity of furnace oil was carried away to the sea shore.

2. On hearing the incident, officers from Kerala State Pollution Control Board rushed to the site immediately and the matter was communicated to the District Collector, Fire and Rescue Department, Indian Coast Guard, Vizhinjam and Indian Coast Guard, Kochi. On a preliminary enquiry it was observed that the oil spread extended upto Thumba (approximately 4.5 km stretch). Assistance of Coast Guard was requested to determine the extent of oil spill. Coast Guard authorities conducted an inspection and informed that the leakage had affected only the shoreline and this has not been carried to the deep sea. Samples of effluent and oily sand were collected from different points along the shore line and also from the source of discharge. The industry premises were also inspected and it was found that the discharge into the drain leading to the sea was completely stopped and the industry was instructed to carry out source level containment. The Kerala State Pollution Control Board was directed immediately to stop the functioning of the factory. The Board officials on inspection found that the pipeline carrying furnace oil had a leak which caused spillage of the same into the discharge drain of treated effluent leading to the sea.

3. District Collector who is the chairperson of the District Disaster Management Authority visited the site. Department of Fire and Rescue also visited the location. As the leakage had already spread to a large area, and as there was no threat of fire the department of Fire and Rescue official informed that no action was required from their end.

4. A hearing was conducted on 17.02.2021 in the chamber of Chairman, Kerala State Pollution Control Board, regarding the oil leakage from the factory and the factory officials were given directions to resume production only after removing



the oil contaminated sand from the polluted stretch of shoreline, outlet inside the factory as well as the outlet drain leading to the sea. The company informed that the contaminated sludge from the outlet drain outside the company premises could not be removed due to public protests. On 24.02.2021 the Chief Environmental Engineer, Head Office and the Senior Environmental Engineer (Technical) Head Office conducted inspection to the unit. During the inspection it was observed that the company was installing on line pH meter at the effluent outlet. The drains, delay ponds etc. inside the premises were found to be cleaned. The excavated/cleaned sludge was deposited in a separate area in the company premises. All outlet drains, including storm water drains inside the unit were found to be sealed. On 01.03.2021 the Chief Environmental Engineer, Head Office and the Chief Environmental Engineer, Regional Office, Thiruvananthapuram conducted an inspection of the outlet outside the company premises. Oil contaminated sand and other materials such as bottles, wooden parts etc were found to be removed.

5. On 01.03.2021, after a meeting conducted by Deputy Collector, Thiruvananthapuram and the public of the locality, the company informed that the contaminated sand was removed from the drain from the outlet outside of the company. But the outlet was blocked by the public so that no effluent could pass through it. The company requested permission for restarting production at a reduced rate of 10 TPD of Titanium Dioxide and to operate the acid plant at 240 TPD on 04.03.2021 without letting any effluent discharge. Permission was granted for the trial run on 09.03.2021 for a period of 5 days with the condition that no effluent shall be discharged to outside of the company premises. The company informed that they had restarted production on 16.03.2021 for trial run purpose. Continuous monitoring was done by KSPCB team throughout the trial run. Unless the blocked effluent outlet is opened the company may not be able to discharge effluent to





outside of the unit with the normal production rate. Now the Travancore Titanium Company has requested for permission to operate the plant with enhanced production of Titanium Dioxide. A report was submitted by the Environmental Engineer, District office Thiruvananthapuram on the trial run of the plant which specified the analysis results of pH levels of the treated effluent, oil and grease and suspended solids and the values were within permissible limits and there was no effluent discharge outside the company premises during the trial run period.

### LOCATION AND NATURE OF ACCIDENT

Accident in the form of furnace oil leak occurred in the factory compound of M/s Travancore Titanium Products, Kochuveli, Thiruvananthapuram-695021. The leak occurred in the overhead pumping line of furnace oil (to the boiler), which was going over the effluent discharge drain and it was dropped as a jet to the open drain which carries treated effluent. The open drain traverses a distance of around 200 meter before discharging into the seashore.

### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

10.12.21, 7.30AM: Pumping of furnace oil started (as reported by the unit).

07.50AM: Damage and leak in pipeline detected and pumping stopped (as reported by the unit)

08.00AM: Action taken for blocking the drains inside the unit.

08.30AM: Action taken for blocking the flow from the outlet point of the open drain into the sea but was stopped due to public protest.

04.00 PM to 11.30 PM: Removal of oil contaminated sand from various locations to the company premises and is being stored in leak proof area.

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11.02.2021, 06.30AM to 01.03.2021, 01.00 PM: - Removal of oil contaminated sand from various locations (about 5000 kg was collected) to the company premises and stored in leak proof area.

Action Taken by the Government

The Government constituted a committee consisting of Principal Secretary (II), Industries Department, Managing Director, Malabar Cements Ltd., Managing Director, Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd to enquire into the leakage of furnace oil through drainage into the sea, vide GO(Rt) No.195/2021/ID dated 12.02.2021.

2. The committee has submitted its report and Travancore Titanium Product Ltd has been directed to comply with the recommendations in the report. A copy of the report is submitted as Annexure I.

3. In this matter the Additional Chief Secretary, Environment conducted a meeting on 09.03.2021. In the meeting the Chairman, KSPCB informed that the company was closed following the furnace oil leak and now almost a month has elapsed since that incident. The company had removed all the oil contaminated sand along the shoreline and at the outlet. Inspection was also conducted recently from the District Office of the Board inside the factory premises to see that the instructions were complied and all maintenance works completed. The company requested for resumption of operation with one fourth production capacity of  $\text{TiO}_2$  and the Board sanctioned the request. The meeting proposed a trial run for 5 days commencing from the day of resumption of operation is proposed which will be monitored by the Kerala State Pollution Control Board, during which, samples of effluent and emission will be collected and analysed. If there is no discharge of treated effluent outside the premises during the trial run and the trial run is found to



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be successful Kerala State Pollution Control Board will revoke the restrictions imposed on the functioning of the unit. During the trial run there shall be no discharge of treated effluent outside the premises.

4. Managing Director, TTP informed in the meeting that the Factories and Boilers have conducted inspection of the factory and they are all set to start the trial run and has further ensured that all environmental norms will adhered to.

5. No immediate damage to human life and health was caused due to the incident. The extent of damage to the environment including land, soil, and marine environment is being assessed. Sand samples from various point of the contaminated stretch have been taken and sent for analysis.

6. Livelihood of fisherman in the locality has been affected for few days. The Chief Environmental Engineer, Regional Office, Thiruvananthapuram has requested the Department of Fisheries to assess and furnish are port on the extent of the marine wealth and fisheries families affected by the incident.





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All the facts stated above are true to the best of Knowledge, belief and information Dated this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2022.

  
DEPONENT

Solemnly affirm and signed before me, by the deponent who is personally known to me on this the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February 2022 at the Office of Additional Chief Secretary, Environment Department.



NALAN. A.T  
SECTION OFFICER  
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT  
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT  
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT  
SECTION OFFICER  
MALAYALAM