

Item No. 07

Court No. 1

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

(By Video Conferencing)

Original Application No. 343/2021

Madhura Rajesh Tawde

Applicant

Versus

State of Maharashtra

Respondent

Date of hearing: 28.09.2022

**CORAM: HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE ADARSH KUMAR GOEL, CHAIRPERSON
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE SUDHIR AGARWAL, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON'BLE PROF. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER
HON'BLE DR. AFROZ AHMAD, EXPERT MEMBER**

Applicant: None

Respondent(s): Mr. Mukesh Verma, Advocate for MPCB & MCZMA

ORDER

1. Grievance in this application is for remedial action against damage to the environment in Mumbai city near coastal road at Wadala to Mahul, close to Chembur to CST freeway by adding debris on the salt pan, making island out of it and encroaching the same, affecting the mangroves which are important for Mumbai city. Unauthorized structures are against CRZ Regulations issued under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

2. Vide order dated 15.12.2021, the Tribunal sought a factual and action taken report from a six-member joint Committee of Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA), CPCB, State PCB, SEIAA, Maharashtra, BMC and the concerned District Magistrate.

3. In pursuance of above, report of the joint Committee has been filed on 26.09.2022 by the State PCB with following observations, conclusion and recommendations:

“3.0 Observations and findings

This report is outcome containing factual and action taken report of the said joint committee based on the meetings of the joint committee, information received from concerned agencies viz. Office of the Dy. Salt Commissioner and MCZMA through MPCB, followed by site inspection and subsequent discussions of the joint committee. The observations & findings of the joint committee are given as below.

- i. The alleged areas as per Hon'ble NGT order i.e. area near costal road at Wadala to Mahul, close to Chembur to CST freeway is a wide area of salt pan within the jurisdiction of F-North / M-West Ward of MCGM, Mumbai.*
- ii. As per the preliminary information gathered during joint committee inspection dated 11/03/2022, prima-facie the said salt pan is a private land situated at C.S.no. 144 & 145, operated by Shri Garodia and it has spread over about 100 to 110 acres. Wherein, at C.S.no. 144, majority of the area has been encroached by slum dwellers by constructing houses made of brick masonry and cement roofing sheets. Besides the aforesaid C. S.no. 144, majority of the area has also been encroached by slum dwellers at C. S. no. 117 (reportedly land belonging to Govt. of Maharashtra).*
- iii. As per the information provided by Dy. Salt Commissioner, Mumbai vide letter dated 25/08/2022, land bearing C.S. no. 144 & 145 under Hormoz Salt Works are owned by the Govt. of India. However, the aforesaid C.S. nos. are being operated by the salt manufacturers and as per the aforesaid letter dated 25/08/2022, an eviction proceeding against the salt manufacturers under provisions of Public Premises Act, 1971 is pending before the Estate Officer of Dy. Salt Commissioner's office since 2013.*
- iv. It is observed that along the periphery of slat pan at C. S. no. 145, dense mangroves have been spread. However, the operator of slat pan/salt manufacturer i.e. Shri Garodia has constructed a huge bund (app. 5 feet height & 10 feet width, made of unprocessed C&D waste) between the dense mangrove area and salt pans. It was informed that C&D waste reportedly generated from South Mumbai is being dumped by the private parties upon obtaining consent of operator of salt pan. However, no documentary evidences for prior consent for dumping/utilization of C&D waste were*

produced to the joint committee. It was further informed to the joint committee that such bund has been constructed to prevent intrusion of creek water into salt pan from adjacent creek, without construction of such bund the intrusion of creek water may causes flooding and also significantly affects the quality of salt in the salt pans.

- v. As per the information provided by the Dy. Salt Commissioner, Mumbai vide letter dated 25/08/2022, the operator of slat pan/salt manufacturer has not obtained permission from the Dy. Salt Commissioner's Office to carry-out repair or maintenance of the salt work outer bund. Further, it was also informed by the Dy. Salt Commissioner, Mumbai that no permission was granted to the operator of slat pan/salt manufacturer or also no such permission may not be required for regular repair or maintenance of the outer embankment of salt works.*
- vi. Further, it is observed from the reply submitted by the Dy. Salt Commissioner, Mumbai vide letter dated 27/04/2022 to the Director, Vanashakti (w.r.t. the representation made by Vanashakti regarding massive dumping of debris on wetlands, mangroves and salt pans at Wadala, Mumbai) that bunds located in the alleged area of about 1 km long was damaged due to Taukte Cyclone in May, 2021. Accordingly, the operator of slat pan/salt manufacturer has carried-out repairing activities by dumping debris in order to prevent intrusion of sea into salt pans water during high tides.*
- vii. Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority, Department of Environment, Govt. of Maharashtra has uploaded the approved CZMP of Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban, 2019 in their website, which is as per the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, 2019 The approved CZMP of the area under reference is given at **Annexure-5** for kind reference and the copy of the same is available at <https://mczma.ciov.in/sites/default/files/CZMP°/020MH%2076.01>*
- viii. The area under reference i.e. C.S. no. 145 was superimposed on the approved CZMP of Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban, 2019 prepared by the MCZMA. Copy of superimposed CZMP of Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburban, 2019 is given at **Annexure-6** for kind reference. Based on the analysis and superimposition of CZMP, it is observed that the aforesaid C.S. no. 145, where salt harvesting is being done falls under CRZ-IB as per the CRZ Notification, 2019. Further, as per s. no. (xvii) of section 5.1.2: CRZ-I B - The inter tidal areas of the CRZ Notification, 2019; salt harvesting and associated facilities are being regulated or permissible in the CRZ-I B areas. Also, based on the analysis and superimposition of CZMP, it*

is observed that the existing bund (along the periphery of slat pan at C. S. no. 145) which is repaired & augmented by dumping C&D waste, falls within the 50 m mangrove buffer zone i.e. CRZ-I A as per the CRZ Notification, 2019. Further, 5.1.1 of section 5.0 of the CRZ Notification, 2019 stipulates about regulation of permissible activities in CRZ-IA; wherein certain activities shall be permitted like laying of pipelines, transmission lines, conveyance systems or mechanisms and construction of road on stilts, etc. that are required for public utilities. However, the aforesaid section of CRZ Notification, 2019 doesn't specify about repair & augmentation of existing bunds. Whereas, only in CRZ-I B-The inter tidal areas, bunding activities are permitted. Nevertheless, carrying out repairing & augmentation works of existing bund (by dumping unprocessed C&D waste & debris), falling within 50 m mangrove buffer zone without prior permission is not justifiable and also not a permitted activity as per CRZ Notification, 2019.

- ix. As informed by the operator of slat pan/salt manufacturer, total seven bore-wells have been installed within the slat pan area for extraction of slat laden ground water and subsequent channelizing into salt pans for manufacturing/harvesting slat.
- x. Some of the photographs taken during the joint committee inspection is given at **Annexure-7** for kind ready reference.

4.0 Conclusions

The alleged area i.e. C.S. no. 144 & 145 is under M/s Hormoz Salt Works are owned by the Govt. of India. However, the aforesaid C.S. no. 145 is being operated by the salt manufacturer for harvesting of salt. Presently, an eviction proceeding against the salt manufacturers under provisions of Public Premises Act, 1971 is pending before the Estate Officer of Dy. Salt Commissioner's Office since 2013. Based on the analysis and superimposition of CZMP, it is observed that the aforesaid C.S. no. 145, where salt harvesting is being done falls under CRZ-IB as per the CRZ Notification, 2019. Further, as per s. no. (xvii) of section 5.1.2: CRZ-I B - The inter tidal areas of the CRZ Notification, 2019; salt harvesting and associated facilities are being regulated or permissible in the CRZ-I B areas.

Also, based on the analysis and superimposition of CZMP, it is observed that the existing bund (along the periphery of slat pan at C. S. no. 145) which is repaired & augmented by dumping C&D waste, falls within the 50 m mangrove buffer zone i.e. CRZ-I A as per the CRZ Notification, 2019. The activities regulated under CRZ-I A of the CRZ Notification, 2019 doesn't specify about repair & augmentation of existing bunds. Whereas, only in CRZ-I B-The inter tidal areas, bunding activities are permitted.

Damage of bunds reportedly due to Taukte Cyclone in May, 2021, the repairing activities is carried-out by the operator of slat pan/salt manufacturer by dumping C&D waste & debris in order to prevent intrusion of sea into salt pans water during high tides.

During site inspection no mangroves were observed towards landward side i.e. in salt pan area (CRZ-I B). However, dense mangroves are observed towards creek-ward side i.e. in close proximity to the existing outer bund of salt pan. Operator of slat pan/salt manufacturer has not obtained permission from the Dy. Salt Commissioner's Office to carry-out repair or maintenance of outer bund of the salt works. Nevertheless, carrying out repairing & augmentation works of existing bund (by dumping unprocessed C&D waste & debris), falling within 50 m mangrove buffer zone i.e. CRZ-1 A, without prior permission is not justifiable and also not a permitted activity as per CRZ Notification, 2019.

As per the annual report on Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules, 2016 for the state of Maharashtra (2020-2021) published by MPCB that MCGM, Mumbai generated 34,58,548 MT of C&D waste during calendar year January to December, 2020. Further, based on the aforesaid report it is observed that MCGM doesn't have designated C&D waste processing facility for handling & processing of C&D waste and the aforesaid quantity of 34,58,548 MT of C&D waste was disposed by landfilling without processing or filled in low lying area. In absence of such environmentally sound C&D waste processing facility, undue/unauthorized utilization/disposal of unprocessed C&D waste in low lying areas, CRZ areas or in any other areas cannot be ruled-out, as it is evident from the present matter; where the unprocessed C&D waste is being utilized for repairing & augmentation activities of outer bunds of slat works/pan, which is falling within the 50 m mangrove buffer zone as per the superimposed map of the area under reference.

Whereas the C.S. no. 144 is being encroached by slum dwellers by reclaiming the land and constructing houses made of brick masonry & cement roofing sheets. Also, some temporary structures are raised in south-western side of C.S. no. 144 by the operator of slat pan/salt manufacturer by reclaiming the land with dumping C&D waste & debris. Similarly, the C.S. no. 117 belongs to Govt. of Maharashtra, is also being encroached by slum dwellers by reclaiming the land. Based on the analysis and superimposition of CZMP, it is observed that C.S. no. 144 and 117 falls under CRZ-II, where certain activities are permitted as per section 5.2 of 5.0 of the CRZ Notification, 2019, stipulates about regulation of permissible activities in CRZ. The construction of buildings for residential purposes, schools, hospitals, institutions, offices, public places, etc. shall be permitted only on the landward side of the existing road, or on the landward side of existing authorised fixed structures is permitted w.r.t. subject to the

local town and country planning regulations as applicable from time to time, and the norms for the Floor Space Index (FSI) or Floor Area Ratio (FAR) prevailing as on the date of Notification.

5.0 Recommendations

- (a) For violations of provisions of CRZ Notification, 2019 In view of the aforesaid violations of:
- i. *Dumping C&D waste/debris for carrying out repairing & augmentation works of existing bund, falling within 50 m mangrove buffer zone i.e. CRZ-I A. The operator of salt pan/salt manufacturer under the supervision of Office of Dy. Salt Commissioner, Mumbai and F(N)/ M(W) Ward of MCGM may be directed to remove the unauthorized dumping of C&D waste and shall dispose the same in an environmentally sound manner in the nearby C&D waste processing facility at Navi Mumbai or other facility, as appropriate.*
- (b) *Dy. Salt Commissioner, Hon'ble Collector Mumbai / Mumbai Suburban & F(N)/ M(W) Ward of MCGM may take appropriate action and also to remove illegal encroachments (construction of houses & other temporary structures) at C. S. no. 144 & C. S. no. 117, which is a CRZ-II area, so as to ensure the restoration of the aforesaid area to its original condition.*
- (c) *MCGM may be directed to submit a time bound action plan along with budgetary estimate for selection of appropriate site as per Schedule-I of the Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules, 2016 and also to establish adequate C&D waste processing facility for handling, processing & disposal of C&D waste as per Rule 6 of the Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules, 2016.*
- (d) *Till such facility is established w.r.t. (c) as above, MCGM to issue detailed directions with regard to proper collection, management of C&D waste within its jurisdiction in accordance with the provisions of aforesaid Rules. Also, to ensure that such waste should be processed only at nearby processing facility. Further, MCGM should increase surveillance activities to abate undue/unauthorized disposal of C&D waste at sensitive areas viz. CRZ areas, river banks, etc. Office of the Dy. Salt Commissioner, Mumbai should ensure that no undue/unauthorized dumping of C&D wastes in the areas under their jurisdiction may not be permitted in near future, as in the present case the alleged area falls within 50 m mangrove buffer zone i.e. CRZ-I A, as per CRZ Notification, 2019. However, in case such undue/unauthorized dumping is observed/reported*

through public grievances etc., such instances may be immediately brought to the notice of MCGM for taking appropriate penal action against violators.”

4. We have heard learned Counsel for the State PCB. The report shows that there have been unchecked violations by way of encroachments, construction of bund, other illegal constructions and dumping of debris in violation of environmental norms and to the detriment of environment, particularly mangroves. However, the Committee has not indicated the violators of CRZ Notification and also not mentioned the action taken or proposed against such violators.

5. The recommendations in the report to remove unauthorized dumping of waste, removing illegal encroachments and restoration of the area have to be accepted. MCGMA has to prepare a time bound action plan with budgetary support in the matter and has to issue directions for scientific handling of waste. The Salt Commissioner, Mumbai has also to take necessary action in the matter. This needs to be overseen by the Principal Secretary, Environment, Maharashtra. NCZMA has also to oversee compliance in terms of Notification dated 11.05.2022 issued by the MoEF&CC. The NCZMA and Principal Secretary, Environment, Maharashtra may file action taken reports after coordinating with concerned authorities, particularly giving progress in encroachments removed, waste collected and sent to authorized processing plant, restoration of degraded/encroached area and plan to set up C&D processing plants and other associated actions within two months by email at judicial-ngt@gov.in preferably in the form of searchable PDF/OCR Support PDF and not in the form of Image PDF.

6. Principal Secretary, Environment Department, Maharashtra may remain present in person for interaction with the Tribunal by video conference on the next date.

List for further consideration on 02.01.2023.

A copy of this order be forwarded to CPCB, NCZMA, MPCB, Principal Secretary, Environment, Maharashtra, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Greater Mumbai and Collector, Bandra by e-mail for compliance.

Adarsh Kumar Goel, CP

Sudhir Agarwal, JM

Prof. A. Senthil Vel, EM

Dr. Afroz Ahmad, EM

September 28, 2022
Original Application No. 343/2021
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